

# Transportation Committee Passes Nadler-Oberstar Amendment to Scan 100% of Shipping Containers

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WASHINGTON, D.C. &ndash; The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee today adopted an amendment by Congressman Jerrold Nadler and Ranking Member James Oberstar to implement 100-percent scanning of shipping containers bound for the United States. Nadler and Oberstar introduced a standalone version of the legislation, the Sail Only if Scanned (S.O.S.) Act, in March.

The S.O.S. Act, H.R. 4899, calls for all shipping containers bound for the U.S. to be scanned for radiation and density at the port of origin. The bill also calls for every container to bear a tamper-proof seal that would notify U.S. authorities of a breach before the container entered American waters. The bill is supported by House Democratic Leadership, and constitutes of a major tenet of the newly unveiled Democratic Real Security Agenda.

"It's common knowledge that Al Qaeda wants to sneak a nuclear weapon into this country &ndash; yet this Administration has been content to let 95 percent of the shipping containers we receive go uninspected," Congressman Nadler said. "We will only be safe when we know the contents of every container headed for our shores. Democrats are committed to making 100-percent scanning the policy of the United States."

"Under the amendment, we'll be approaching total scanning of containers destined for the U.S. in three years," Congressman Oberstar said. "That is significant progress. This amendment represents a major step forward in protecting the American people from the threat of a shipping container loaded with a weapon of mass destruction."

"Our port security system is full of holes &ndash; and that has put our entire country at risk," said House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi. "This legislation, based on the work of Congressmen Nadler and Oberstar, helps to protect our country by scanning and sealing containers before they ever reach our shores, and move through our waterways and across the country. These are the kind of tough and smart policies that make up the Democratic Real Security Agenda, and will keep Americans safe."

"This is an about-face for Republicans, but it's about time," said Congressman James E. Clyburn, Chairman of the House Democratic Caucus. "Last week in the Homeland Security Committee the Republicans were against port security, and today, one week after Democrats unveiled our Real Security Agenda, they're for it. Port security has been ignored since 9/11 by this President and his rubber-stamp Congress. They have talked about making America safe, but have done very little to keep that promise to the American people. One hundred percent scanning of cargo is critical to this nation's security and a hallmark of our Real Security agenda. Since 9/11 Democrats have promoted measures to protect our ports and we will continue to lead the way in making America safe."

The Nadler-Oberstar amendment was adopted during a committee markup of H.R. 4880, the Maritime Terminal Security Enhancement Act of 2006. Last week, Congressman Ed Markey (D-MA) offered the S.O.S. Act as an amendment to a maritime bill moving through the Homeland Security, but it was voted down by the subcommittee's Republican members.

"We simply MUST inspect everything BEFORE it reaches our shores, not after it arrives," Congressman Markey said. "Right now only about 5 percent of all containers coming into our ports are physically inspected. The technology already exists to do so, and is being used both at the port of Hong Kong AND at the port of Boston to screen inbound cargo. Last week House Republicans on the Homeland Security Committee defeated my amendment to require 100 percent cargo screening. I am hopeful that they will abandon their misguided opposition to this common-sense security measure as the legislative process moves forward."

"This Administration has failed in securing our ports," said Congressman Bill Pascrell, lead Democratic cosponsor of the Maritime Terminal Security Enhancements Act of 2006. "Our world irrevocably changed five years ago. It is unconscionable that only about five percent of containers are physically inspected before arriving in American ports. The forward-thinking amendment which passed in Committee today is an important step in securing a gap that this Administration should have closed years ago."

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